CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	T5S R2W Sect. 36 Fence Construction
Proposed Implementation Date:	June 2016
Proponent:	Spanish Q Inc
Location:	Township 5S Range 2W Section 36
County:	Madison
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proposed Improvements Request is for the construction of a boundary fence along the north and east sides of Township 5S Range 2W Section 36. The fence would keep livestock not owned by the lessee off of the state section and keep the lessees wild horse contained.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Montana Natural Heritage Program – Animal species of Concern
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks – Julie Cunningham, Wildlife Biologist; Dean Waltee, Wildlife Biologist

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program - habitat approval

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action - Grant Improvements, allow for the construction of the fence.

No Action – Do not allow for the construction of the fence, leaving the parcel as is.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Due to the limited scope of the project, no effect to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture would be expected under the action and no action alternatives.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Under both the action and no action alternative no effect on water quality, quantity and distribution would be expected.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Under the action alternative an increase in vehicle/machinery activity could be expected to increase while the fence in under construction and/or if maintenance was needed after fence construction. Due to the small scope of the project no change in current air quality would be expected.

Air quality would not change from its current state under the no action alternative.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

With the action alternative the fence line would be cleared with equipment. No lasting effect would be expected.

No change from current conditions under the no action alternative.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The area in which this parcel is location is highly traveled by Pronghorns, and a fence could greatly limit their mobility and potentially be life threatening if they got tangled in the wire. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks would prefer no fence, but if a fence must be built it be wildlife friendly. This would include such things as the bottom wire being 16 inches or higher, a smooth bottom wire, top wire no more than 42 inches, a 'goat bar' and/or gaps in the fence.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists the Wolverine, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, and Brewer's Sparrow as possible species of concern in the Township and Range in which the parcel is located. None of these species should be affected by the action alternative.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

Lithic Scatter has been identified in the SW1/4 of the SW1/4 of the section. The action alternative does not take place in this location therefor will have no effect.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No effects to aesthetics would be expected with either alternative.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

Neither alternative would require resources.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

This parcel is located in general sage grouse habitat. Approval needed by the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No effect under either alternative would be expected.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

No effect under either alternative.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

No effect under either alternative.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

No effect under either alternative.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

No effect under either alternative.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

No effect under either alternative.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

No effect under either alternative.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

No effect under either alternative.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No effect under either alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

No effect under either alternative.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The fence would enable more efficient management of the livestock on this parcel of school Trust Land leased for grazing.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Katie Svoboda/s/	**Date:** 6/17/16
	Title: Bozeman Unit Office Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED: Allow for the construction of the fence, with stipulations as follows;

- The top to be less than 42 inches in height.
- The bottom wire to be smooth and greater than 16 inches in height.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS: I have determined that none of the anticipated environmental impacts outlined in the EA are significant according to the criteria outlined in *ARM 36.2.524.* I find that no impacts are regarded as severe, enduring, geographically widespread, or frequent. Further, I find that the quantity and quality of various resources, including any that may be considered unique or fragile, will not be adversely affected to a significant degree. I find no precedent for future actions that would cause significant impacts, and I find no conflict with local, State, or Federal laws, requirements, or formal plans. In summary, I find that the identified adverse impacts will be avoided, controlled, or mitigated by the design of the project to the extent that the impacts are not significant.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

[ ]	EIS	[ ]	More Detailed EA	[X]	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:** Craig Campbell	
	Title: Bozeman Unit Manager	
Signature: Craig Campbell/s/		**Date:** 7/1/2016